
**THEORETICAL BASIS OF CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES:
GUATEMALA AS A CASE OF STUDY**

Por: Giovanni E. Reyes¹

RESUMEN

El principal objetivo de este trabajo es presentar un conjunto de reflexiones adaptadas a las condiciones de países en desarrollo, en relación con la teoría de la crisis de legitimidad, propuesta en la Escuela de Francfort, por Jürgen Habermas. Más específicamente, el argumento de este estudio consiste en desarrollar una aplicación de la referida teoría para las condiciones sociales y políticas de los países subdesarrollados, considerando a Guatemala como caso de estudio. Tanto el objetivo como el argumento fundamental se basan en que estos postulados de Habermas han sido formulados para las condiciones de los países más desarrollados. De allí que sus fundamentos requieran de adaptaciones a las naciones menos avanzadas.

Palabras clave: legitimidad, desarrollo económico-social, condiciones políticas.

Clasificación JEL: H10, H59, O10, O29.

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1. Ph.D. in Economics of Development and International Relations, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Reyes has also graduated certificates from the universities of Pennsylvania and Harvard; former Director of the Latin American Economic System (LAEC), consultant for United Nations Organization (UNDP, IAEA and UNICEF); he has worked at the Vienna International Center in Austria, and the International Coffee Organization in London; currently Dean of the School of Economics at the Catholic University of Colombia.

SUMMARY

The main aim of this study to show reflections concerning principles of the theory of legitimacy, formulated as part of the School of Frankfurt, by Jürgen Habermas. In a more concrete way, the core argument of this paper is to develop applications of the aforementioned theory to the conditions that are main features, as social, economic and political conditions, of less developed nations. This study takes Guatemala as a case of study. The main objective and core argument this paper undertakes are based on the consideration that foundations of crisis of legitimacy were essentially formulated taking into consideration circumstances of more advanced countries; those state of affairs are not equal to the Third World nations.

Key Words: legitimacy, social and economic development, political conditions.

JEL Classification: H10, H59, O10, O29.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main argument of this study is based on the consideration that Jürgen Habermas' (1929, Düsseldorf, Germany) theory on the crisis of legitimacy is a useful social theory to explain and interpret the social reality in more developed countries. Notwithstanding, its application to the conditions that many times need to endure less developed countries is not exactly the same as that of the more powerful nations. Habermas' theory in its adaptation to the Third World permits the explanation of many aspects of the social reality of these nations².

The core objective of this essay is to show adjustments of the theoretical foundations as contents of the theory of crisis of legitimacy, to less developed nations. What I am using as the main case of study here is the set of

2. It is possible to distinguish a distinction between normative legitimacy and sociological or political legitimacy. From the first standpoint, we talk about legitimacy as a normative concept. When we use "legitimacy" in the normative sense, we are making assertions about some aspect of the rightness or wrongness of some action or institution. On the other hand, legitimacy is also a sociological concept. When we use legitimacy in the sociological sense, we are making assertions about legitimacy beliefs -about what attitudes people have. Although these two senses of legitimacy are related to one another, they are not the same. That's because an institution could be perceived as legitimate on the basis of false empirical beliefs or incorrect value premises. The opposite can also be true: for example in the case of a particular and controversial court decision (i.e. the case of presidential elections of fall 2000: Bush v. Gore, etc.) could have been perceived as illegitimate, even if it had been a legitimate decision; see more in (http://lsolum.typepad.com/legal_theory_lexicon/).

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